



*Published to advance the Science of cold-blooded vertebrates*

### SMALLEST TARPON

In my note entitled "A Record of Young Tarpon" in *Copeia* of April 25, 1921, I stated inadvertently that "the smallest specimens of record are those taken by Evermann and others in a shallow brackish pool in Porto Rico in February, 1899." As a matter of fact, the small examples taken in the brackish pool at Huacares were not so small as those of 2.25 to 2.35 inches collected at Fajardo by the same expedition. The date and conditions of environment of the latter specimens are not recorded.

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### TURTLE HUNTING IN MIDWINTER

Midwinter in New York with the streams and ponds ice-bound seems a most unlikely time to hunt Wood Turtles (*Clemmys insculpta*); nevertheless, a search revealed their winter quarters and we secured a specimen.

On October 12, 1920, the senior writer found two Wood Turtles in a cold, spring-fed stream near Bachus pond, Rensselaer county. The specimens, one of which was captured, were in about eighteen inches of water and were resting, one on top of the other, as in the case cited by Mr. Charles H. Rogers in *Copeia*, No. 47, 1917, p. 74. The late occurrence of this species in the stream suggested the possibility of

their being in search of a place to hibernate. This suggestion was confirmed about December 12, 1920, when the junior author found several specimens hibernating under water in abandoned muskrat holes in the side of a little stream near Defreestville, Rensselaer county. Of the specimens then found, two were saved and brought to the State Museum and the others returned to the stream.

On January 15, 1921, the writers, accompanied by Mr. Lee W. Crittenden of Albany, visited the stream where the specimens had been found in December.

The equipment needed for turtle hunting in winter is simple,—an axe, a bath towel, a Farm Bureau Manager with a Ford Car and a strong constitution being the chief requisites. With the axe the ice was cut from the edge of the stream to permit exploration of the muskrat holes and shallow, water excavated cavities underneath the bank. Stout sticks were used for prodding until something hard was encountered; investigations were then continued by lying prone on the bank and trusting the arm to the shoulder, in the icy water. The bath towel functioned after each bit of exploration.

Several rods of bank in the vicinity of the spot where the turtles had been found in December was searched without results; but upstream, in the mud of the stream bottom and at a depth of about eighteen inches below the surface of the water a large specimen was found by sounding with a stick and was recovered by hand. The turtle, perfectly dormant in the water, showed some signs of life soon after being taken out and a few minutes in a warm room restored it to normal activity.

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### A SNAKE NEW TO CALIFORNIA

On March 25, 1921, in the wash from Tahquitz Creek, near Palm Springs, Riverside County, Cali-

fornia, an overturned rock disclosed a small snake lying in a slight depression in the sand. From its coloration a glance would suggest a baby rattler, pinkish white with brown spots along the back, but its peculiar leaflike rostral plate indicates it to be *Phyllorhynchus decurtatus*. In the essential points it checks with the description given by Cope (Report of National Museum, 1898, p. 823). The scales are smooth; anal is entire; urosteges are divided; rostral apex just touches the suture of the prefrontals; and suboculars are present. Measurements, inexact because taken from live specimen, are seven inches for total length and five-eighths for tail. The ground color is buff above and white below with a pinkish cast due to blood showing through the translucent skin. On the back from head to tail are forty-six spots of brown and on the sides a row of smaller brown spots in more or less double rows alternating with the dorsal blotches. Cope gives about thirty-two dorsal spots. On the head a broad brown band runs from the angles of the mouth through eye to the prefrontals. On each parietal is a rounded brown spot. The pupil of the eye is elliptical and the eye is large.

This is the first specimen to be recorded from California. Two have been recorded from Lower California (Cope, loc. cit.) and one from Yuma, Arizona (Ditmars: Reptile Book, p. 293).

The snake in captivity spends most of the time hidden in the sand. When active above ground it frequently runs out its long white forked tongue.

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## HOMING AND OTHER HABITS OF THE BULL-FROG

While at Stag Lake, New Jersey, in October, 1920, I was told by my host, Mr. Justus von Lengerke, of some interesting observations he and members of his family had made upon a bull-frog at that place. The frog was first observed near shore and

being not at all shy was picked up in a dip-net and handled by various persons before being put back in the water. At this examination it was noted that one front foot was missing, the stump being thoroughly healed over. The frog was visited and picked up every day and seemed to enjoy being stroked; eventually it became so tame that it could be caught by hand at any time. After this acquaintance with the frog was well begun, it was noted that ducklings which were being reared along the same part of the lake shore were disappearing, quite regularly, at the rate of one a day. Thinking that the bull-frog might be responsible, yet not wishing to kill such a pet, Mr. von Lengerke removed it to the opposite shore and some distance down an arm of the lake. Next morning the frog was back at its accustomed haunt. Surprise was felt that the animal had so quickly found its way home, so the next time to make assurance doubly sure, it was removed to a small isolated spring hole, a quarter of a mile away over land. This time the frog was home again the second morning afterward, travel apparently being done at night. A few days later one of the boys, seeing a commotion in the water involving a duckling fired into the hurly-burly with a .22 calibre rifle. The disturbance ceased and examination revealed the stump-legged bull-frog, neatly perforated, in the act of swallowing a three-weeks old duckling.

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